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Serial No. 10/735,328

PATENT APPLICATION

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1 1. (currently amended) A retractable electric wall outlet assembly, comprising:
2 a cover plate defining a generally rectangular opening;
3 an electric box having an electric plug receptacle, said electric box being coupled to said
4 cover plate for movement between an inoperable configuration retracted through said
5 opening rearward of said cover plate and an operable configuration extending
6 through said opening forward of said cover plate;
7 means for biasing said electric box toward said operable configuration; ~~and~~
8 a latch assembly for releasably holding said electric box at said inoperable configuration;
9 wherein said latch assembly includes:
10 a latch member mounted to a rear surface of said electric box and extending
11 outwardly;
12 a track structure mounted to a rear surface of said cover plate and extending
13 outwardly, said latch member being positioned to engagingly move
14 along said track structure when said electric box is moved between said
15 operable and inoperable configurations; and
16 wherein said track structure defines a recess for receiving and releasably
17 holding said latch member when said electric box is at said inoperable
18 configuration.

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1 2. (original) The retractable electric wall outlet assembly as in claim 1 wherein said
2 electric box is pivotally coupled to said face plate adjacent said opening such that said electric
3 box is pivotally movable through said opening between said inoperable and operable
4 configurations.

1 3. (original) The retractable electric wall outlet assembly as in claim 2 wherein said
2 biasing means is a torsion spring mounted to a rear surface of said face plate and connected to
3 said electric box for biasing said electric box toward said operable configuration.

1 4. (canceled)

1 5. (currently amended) The retractable electric wall outlet assembly as in ~~claim 4~~
2 claim 1 wherein:

3 said track structure includes a generally Y-shaped configuration having a deep slot
4 extending substantially between said rear surface of said cover plate and said recess
5 and being in communication with said recess;

6 said latch member being constructed of a shape memory material, whereby said latch
7 member is configured to engage and travel along said deep slot and is naturally
8 biased to be deposited into said recess and retained therein when said electric box is
9 moved to said inoperable configuration.

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1 6. (original) The retractable electric wall outlet assembly as in claim 5 wherein:
2 said track structure includes a shallow slot extending between said recess and a proximal
3 end of said deep slot and being in communication therewith; and
4 said latch member is naturally biased to engage said shallow slot when said latch member
5 is urged beyond said recess such that said latch member travels along said shallow
6 slot and is deposited in said deep slot when said electric box reaches said operable
7 configuration.

1 7. (original) The retractable electric wall outlet assembly as in claim 6 wherein:
2 said electric box is moved from said operable configuration to said inoperable
3 configuration upon a first depression of said electric box; and
4 said electric box is moved from said inoperable configuration and said operable
5 configuration upon a second depression of said electric box.

1 8. (canceled)

1 9. (original) The retractable electric wall outlet assembly as in claim 1 wherein:
2 said electric box includes a generally rectangular configuration being dimensioned slightly
3 smaller than dimensions of said cover plate opening such that said electric box can
4 pass through said opening; and

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5 a front surface of said electric box is substantially flush with a front surface of said cover
6 plate at said inoperable configuration and said electric box front surface is forwardly
7 displaced from said front surface of said cover plate at said operable configuration.

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10. (currently amended) A retractable electric wall outlet assembly for providing selective access to electric receptacles, comprising:

a generally flat cover plate having a rectangular configuration dimensioned to overlay a wall electric outlet opening, said cover plate defining a generally rectangular opening having dimensions substantially similar to dimensions of the wall electric outlet opening;

an electric box being pivotally coupled to said cover plate and having a plurality of electric plug receptacles, said electric box being movable through said cover plate opening between a retracted configuration in which an electric box front surface is generally flush with a cover plate front surface such that said plurality of electric plug receptacles are inaccessible and an extended configuration in which said electric box front surface is forwardly displaced from said cover plate such that said plurality of electric plug receptacles are accessible;

a spring coupled to said cover plate and connected to said electric box for biasing said electric box toward said extended configuration; and

a latch assembly interconnecting said electric box and said cover plate for releasably holding said electric box in said retracted configuration;

wherein said latch assembly includes:

a latch member mounted to a rear surface of said electric box and extending outwardly;

a support member mounted to a rear surface of said cover plate and extending outwardly; and

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23 a push latch mounted to a distal end of said support member relative to said
24 cover plate for selectively capturing and releasing said latch member.

1 Claims 11-16 (canceled)

1 17. (original) The retractable electric wall outlet as in claim 10 wherein said spring is
2 a torsion spring.

1 18. (currently amended) The retractable electric wall outlet assembly as in ~~claim 16~~
2 claim 10 wherein said support member includes a generally arcuate configuration corresponding
3 to an angular path of the pivotal movement of said electric box.

1 19. (original) The retractable electric wall outlet as in claim 10 wherein:
2 said electric box includes a generally rectangular configuration having dimensions slightly
3 smaller than dimensions of said cover plate opening such that said electric box can
4 pass through said opening; and
5 a front surface of said electric box is substantially flush with a front surface of said cover
6 plate at said retracted configuration and said electric box front surface is forwardly
7 displaced from said front surface of said cover plate at said extended configuration

1 20. (original) A retractable electric wall outlet assembly for providing selective
2 access to electric receptacles, comprising:

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3 a generally flat cover plate having a rectangular configuration dimensioned to overlay a
4 wall electric outlet opening, said cover plate defining a generally rectangular opening
5 having dimensions substantially similar to dimensions of the wall electric outlet
6 opening;

7 an electric box being pivotally coupled to said cover plate and having a plurality of electric
8 plug receptacles situated on opposed side panels, said electric box being movable
9 through said cover plate opening between a retracted configuration in which an
10 electric box front surface is generally flush with a cover plate front surface such that
11 said plurality of electric plug receptacles are inaccessible and an extended
12 configuration in which said electric box front surface is forwardly displaced from
13 said cover plate such that said plurality of electric plug receptacles are accessible;

14 a torsion spring coupled to said cover plate and connected to said electric box for biasing
15 said electric box toward said extended configuration;

16 a latch assembly interconnecting said electric box and said cover plate for releasably
17 holding said electric box in said retracted configuration, said latch assembly
18 comprising:

19 a support bracket mounted to a rear surface of said cover plate and having a
20 track structure;

21 a latch member mounted to a rear surface of said electric box and extending
22 outwardly therefrom defining a longitudinal axis, said latch member
23 being positioned to engage said track structure;

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24 said track structure having a deep slot with a distal end displaced from said
25 longitudinal axis, said latch member being naturally biased to return
26 toward said longitudinal axis;
27 said track structure defining a recess in communication with said distal end of
28 said deep slot for releasably capturing said latch member when said latch
29 member is urged to said distal end of said deep slot; and
30 said track structure defining a shallow slot connecting said recess with a
31 proximal end of said deep slot when said latch member is urged out of
32 said recess, said shallow slot being configured to guide said latch
33 member to said deep slot proximal end when said electric box is moved
34 from said retracted configuration to said extended configuration.